1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

556 riage connections by joining together families of approximately
[581] equal wealth and that it is an important source of power. There
[622] is a strong tendency for village officers and other members of
[624] founding lineages to be richer than later immigrants; hence wealth tends to be joined with hereditary office. In the informal councils which precede formal deliberations over disputes or policy, men listen more attentively to the statements of the wealthy. This attentiveness is a sign of respect, but also of recognition of the wealthy individual's ability to give or withhold favors; sometimes there is also the informal bribery of generous hospitality, and on occasion, outright bribes in return for support. Wealth differences can result in special likenesses and differences within Santal society, and even ceremonies graded in cost, as will be discussed later.

554 It would normally go without saying that those who hold
182 positions of special power and prestige have a special interest in the preservation of traditional solidarity and provide a natural source of endogenous pressure for the maintenance of traditional structure. It receives mention here only because it will soon be shown that other circumstances make these same privileged Santal especially subject to tribally disintegrative centrifugal pressures.

[P. 26 is blank]

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF ABORIGINE PUPILS*

Year	*Number*
1924–25	4,801
1925–26	5,221
1926–27	5,569
1927–28	5,874
1928–29	6,140
1929–30	6,111
1930–31	6,068
1931–32	6,244
1932–33	6,730
1933–34	6,555
1934–35	6,569
1935–36	6,618
1936–37	6,466
1937–38	6,877
1938–39	8,473

is such a potent cultural divider that social relations are generally unintelligible today without knowledge of the education of the participants. In conversation, the Santal constantly differentiate people according to whether they are "educated-literate" (*paraoc'*; Hindi: *parna* = to read) or "ignorant-illiterate" (*murukh*; Hindi = ignorant). Education and literacy not only confer social prestige; they also produce a qualitatively different kind of Hinduization than the casual acceptance of a

* (Mukherjea) While it is true that there are other "aborigines" in Mayurbhanj, the Santal are the largest of such groups, and there is no reason to think they have contributed a disproportionately small share to these totals. Unfortunately there are no later figures available, nor are there comparable figures for Singhbhum.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 few Hindu traits. It is the depth of change which education may
871 produce that holds such significance for Santal solidarity.

• [554] Most schools, particularly beyond the first few classes, are not located in Santal villages or even *bustees* and therefore require attendance out of the social context of the Santal community. High schools and colleges are found only in towns and cities, so that the Santal attending these institutions often have to spend the entire school year in these alien communities. Removed from their own supporting social milieu, Santal students are exposed to Hindu influences; since almost all these schools are dominated by Hindu headmasters and teachers, considerable internationalization of Hindu beliefs, attitudes, and practices occurs.

177 In the Hindu-dominated schools many Santal have learned
262 not to eat beef; from their schoolmates and instructors they
871 hear that beef eating is degrading, but more than this they observe the abhorrence with which it is regarded. They are also told that beef eating is injurious to health: every Santal student has heard and many believe that "you will become blind if you eat beef during the period of your schooling." However, not every Santal who attends school abandons beef eating permanently. Many resume the practice after completing school, and some never abandon it. While some of the old, uneducated elite also learned not to eat beef, the internalization of the Hindu prohibition which is achieved in school tends to be more profound: internalization leads to wholesale Hinduization rather than the piecemeal adoption of isolated Hindu practices. In general, the longer the schooling, the more profound the internalization. Prior to the 1940's one might have expressed this relationship behaviorally by saying that the probability, e.g., of re-adopting beef eating declines with schooling, but in these days, as shall be shown, new forces have reversed matters be-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177
262
871

haviorally. A Santal student with only a few years of schooling may have learned the rank value of a given practice such as beef eating, but may not have internalized the appropriate feeling of repugnance. He will therefore eat beef and drink rice beer on the sly, but prefer to be known as an abstainer.

177
554
871
181

The "pleasure" traits and the "pleasure" orientation, as well as cow-sacrifice and beef eating, are not only part of the cultural basis of external solidarity; they are also key attributes of low rank value in the prevailing caste system. In the schools one learns, with varying force, that the dominant and powerful Hindus regard both the orientation and the traits associated with it as abhorrent and as symbols of low status. With a high school education or more, internalization is usually adequate to provide Santal with their own abhorrence of this orientation. Such Santal, particularly if they do not return to their native villages but take up residence in Jamshedpur, find themselves unable to participate in the traditional "pleasure" activities, even when they return to or visit a village or *bustee*.

What replaces the "pleasure" orientation is an increased commitment to rank improvement, adequate knowledge of the rank attributes of the Hindu world, and, in the case of the relatively well-educated Santal, the necessary internalization to display these attributes consistently and adequately. As the Santal commonly say, "The 'ignorant-illiterate' do not know who is big and who is small!"

Increased education resulting from the existence and practice of industrial employment has thus widened the cultural gap between the Santal and thereby weakened Santal solidarity. Many uneducated Santal are barely able to interact with the educated and highly acculturated. As one Santal remarked when faced with the prospect of such interaction, "I cannot go to his

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 house, he is like a *Diku*; before him I feel like a black Santal."
554 I have heard other Santal remark that they could not sing or
871 talk freely before a certain educated Santal who was a village
181 leader because his bearing made them ill at ease. It seems particularly difficult to carry on the normal "pleasure" activities such as dancing, singing, drinking, and even convivial conversation, before such august Santal. The same gap seen from the vantage point of the educated is expressed in the following remarks of an educated woman:

> I am happy now to be living in the city because both my child and I were sick from "envy" [i.e., being "envied" by others] when we lived in the *bastee*; all are healthy here. I never danced or sang in the village though I liked to watch; my mother and sister danced but I didn't. When very young I did, but after I started going to school, I didn't. Some don't send their children to school because others will have "envy" and say that highly educated girls will be outcasted for marrying into other castes; that is not true. Why shouldn't we study as high as money allows? *Diku* girls do.

[192] Less eloquent educated Santal simply explain matters by saying that they have become "embarrassed" (*lajao*) to dance, sing, etc.

177 If differential Hinduization is the major component of the
871 gap created by education, it is not the only component. An additional divisive effect of education is that it gives the student a secular orientation which is highly differentiating but of limited effect since only those with college educations acquire it
177 thoroughly. There are various manifestations of this orien-
754 tation, but a particularly interesting example which I have
871 discussed elsewhere[1] concerns differences in beliefs about witch-
184

[1] Orans 1959.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

178 nificant shifts in frequency during this period, nor were there
434 any appreciable changes in the distribution of per capita income.
583 Before considering comparable data from the *bustee*, it is necessary to examine other partial determinants of marriage-
554 type choice so that a controlled comparison can be made. The
583 most significant of these secondary determinants derives from the expectation by the Santal community that members of high standing will validate their status by arranging high forms of marriage—*DB* or *SB*—for their children. These marriages are the occasion for great "pleasure" and the villagers would feel deprived if their "big people" (*maraṅ hoṛ*) were to deny them this opportunity. Since inherited office confers prestige and is partially independent of wealth, it may be presumed, though adequate statistical evidence is lacking, that the holders of hereditary office often feel compelled to choose more expensive forms than income alone would dictate. In support of this contention is the observation that of the seven *DB* of which I have knowledge, all involved the marriage of a son of a hereditary village officer and one was the son of a headman. Although shared values and understandings are prominent determinants of marriage type, idiosyncratic differences such as the desire for prestige may occasionally prove decisive. "Accidents" of contact and personality may compel a young couple to enter
581 into a "love marriage" (*NB*) against parental wishes. Finally,
583 there is the Santal belief that the higher the form of marriage, the greater its chances of lasting. It is possible, therefore, that differences in desire for marriage stability are a factor in marriage form chosen.

125 From the *bustees* a sample of forty-seven was obtained, with
184 the majority from Daredih and the rest from nearby *bustees*.
583 All were industrial workers living in a *bustee* at the time of

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

668 Jamshedpur has further contributed to the new political movement and the new solidarity by the characteristics of its own rank path. The first of these characteristics, even prior to the present period, must have mitigated the centrifugal tendencies present and may even have affected the decision of the
668 Santal elite to support the Jharkhand movement. I refer to the
• 554 fact that rank in Jamshedpur is so largely dependent on wealth translated into appropriate material possessions, and so little dependent on the attributes of high Hinduism or even caste membership. One may at every turn observe the subservience of devout Brahmans to those of lower caste and even to "Harijans" who hold higher positions in the company hierarchy. Prior to the Jharkhand movement the observation of rank in Jamshedpur could only lessen the tendency toward emulating high Hinduism. The aspiring Santal who was well acquainted with Jamshedpur might adopt Western clothing, an automobile or motorcycle, and a *pukha* house (one with modern facilities) rather than vegetarianism, teetotalism, and a sacred thread; he might observe that the Parsees, Europeans, and Westernized Hindus did not pay a price in rank for the lack of high Hindu attributes. But in the context of a market economy and without a political rank path to draw the Santal and other tribals together, these observations suggest individual mobility rather than a socio-cultural movement aimed at improving the rank of tribals as a group; hence without a political rank path this characteristic did not of itself produce a new solidarity. Nevertheless it seems probable that the Jamshedpur experience made the maintenance of tribal solidarity appear consistent with the attainment of superior rank.

668 A second characteristic of Jamshedpur which has favored the
467 Jharkhand movement and therefore tribal and Santal solidarity

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

121
177 concession can be independently observed in Santal social rela-
186 tions with Hindus as well as inferred from Santal comments about the social superiority of the *diku*.

121 Such an emulative tendency, if put into practice, may at first
177 lead to gross copying. Without internalization of emulative
186 attitudes it is not likely to accomplish its objective and results
• 554 in the kind of imitation epitomized by the *nouveau riche*. Such behavior appears gauche and thereby generates its own tendency toward internalization. Emulation may be directed toward attaining rank in interaction with social units belonging to the dominant society or within one's own society.

To concede that another society is more powerful is not tantamount to conceding it superior rank. Such a power concession generates its own borrowing tendencies, which might be termed "power incorporative borrowing," since it involves regarding the more powerful society's traits as possessing a special efficacy, which arises by projecting onto these traits the power of the dominant society. But while power concession does not imply rank concession, rank concession is almost always accompanied by and therefore implies power concession. Rank concession will therefore always be associated with both emulation and power incorporative borrowing. Emulation and power incorporation are often intermingled in particular acts and serve to maintain borrowed practices as well as to generate new borrowings. Power incorporation appears in its purest form in Santal curing practices, whose end is primarily curing efficacy or the belief in such efficacy, though the prestige which accrues to the practitioner who employs borrowed practices is
[755] not without significance. For example, one commonly hears Bengali and Oriya songs and Sanskritic prayers as essential elements in curing rites, though often even the practitioner

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

121
177 does not understand the words. Such practices could hardly
186 have been borrowed because of a peculiar "fit" of their content
• 554 with traditional Santal patterns. Certainly such practices are not
755 naturalistically more efficacious. It is rather a case of connecting status and efficacy which is expressed in the Santal reference to Hindus as "*big* and *knowing* people."

121 There is a third reason for the tendency to adopt practices
177 of the dominant society, one which follows almost inevitably
186 from the condition of being encysted. This is the "external
648 pressure" brought to bear by the dominant society on the encysted society to adopt its customs. The basis for the near inevitability of this pressure is nothing less than the solidarity needs of the dominant society. Surrounding dominant societies must demand allegiance to at least the official symbols of suzerainty; acceptance of a number of other customs is likely also to be demanded as the solidarity needs of the dominant society increase. There are likely also to be a number of customs of the encysted society which the superior society finds repugnant, a reaction which invariably creates some pressure for "reform" of the encysted society. The pressures exerted on the encysted society may include positive rewards for compliance or coercive acts by police or even by an army.

648 Perhaps the oldest and most continuous of such pressures
782 on the Santal has been governmental interference with Santal cow sacrifice and beef eating. Armed interference has been practiced everywhere and has not ceased under present democratic conditions. Cow sacrifice has continued, but in secret so as to avoid prosecution and interruption of the rites. However, some villages, fearing arrest and harassment, have abandoned such sacrifice, particularly where there are Hindus in the village who might report this activity to the authorities. There is no

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

648 782 question that this pressure is the result of repugnance as well as solidarity needs.

177 554 The tendency to borrow which follows rank concession undermines solidarity, for all borrowing, by reducing distinctiveness, weakens solidarity, and borrowing of traits which directly represent solidarity is especially debilitating. Emulative borrowing not only eradicates boundary markers but is destructive of the internal aspect of solidarity, since it is likely to be more intense among segments of the encysted society with superior status. This differential emulation arises largely because of the following conditions: (1) the elite tend to have more intimate contact with members of higher social units because they are often representatives of their society in inter-societal relations, (2) they may attract a coterie belonging to higher social units but personally limited in political and economic power; such a coterie derives political and economic advantage from the relationship and confers prestige on its benefactor, (3) no amount of emulation in the absence of the requisite political and/or economic power can achieve rank improvement; the recognition of this fact contributes to differential emulation since the wealthy and powerful are the only ones in a position to attain higher rank in exogenous relations through emulation. Such differential emulation and the type of external relations described here have been noted among the Santal as well as other tribes in the area.

[184] The impact of differential emulation on internal solidarity is to reduce "likeness" and to provide a cultural basis for divisive status distinctions. The ubiquitousness of "envy" and connected witchcraft in Santal social relations, and the difficulty of relations between the educated Santal elite and the non-elite exemplify this effect. The cultural gap between the

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177
564

traditional, uneducated elite and the ordinary Santal was not nearly so great, nor relations between them so strained.

177
62
692

In addition to the borrowing tendencies which flow from rank concession and the external pressure exerted on encysted societies, there is another centrifugal tendency inherent in being an encysted society: political-judicial encroachment. The increasing jurisdiction of Hindu courts and "village *panchayat*" over affairs formerly handled endogenously are an example; there are also such benefits as the issuance of scholarships, health protection and treatment, digging of tube wells, etc. These encroachments on areas formerly managed by the traditional social organization diminish its authority and importance and serve to attach the Santal more firmly to the surrounding society.

All of the borrowing tendencies which flow from rank concession plus external pressure and encroachment on encysted societies tend to diminish solidarity. If there were no countervailing forces, the world would long ago have become more culturally homogeneous and socially unified than it is. A highly potent force contributing to cultural distinctiveness derives from the necessity of preserving solidarity. Although the basis of solidarity has been widely explored by sociologists and structural anthropologists, there is one condition of solidarity-maintenance which has not received much attention, and it is decisive within the RCS. I refer to the relation between avenues of mobility, or rank paths, as I have called them, and the maintenance of solidarity: some rank paths support solidarity and some undermine or destroy solidarity. Emulation might be assigned to the class of destructive rank paths, but since it is never a successful path in the absence of political and/or economic power, it is not by itself likely to pose a serious threat

Sr Mukherjee O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

614 *Holarrhena Antidysenterica*). This sub-clan does not eat the leaves of these trees.

(ix) Karda Hèmbròm (Kaḍa Hèmbròm?). Also referred to in the Mayurbhanj Census Report.

5. *Màrṇḍi*

[554] [426] [578] The fifth class is the clan of the Màrṇḍis, the rich men and money-lenders of the Santal traditions, with whom, we have seen, the Kiskus had a severe clash. The term "màrṇḍi" means "a weed of rice cultivation (*Ischaemum rugosum*, Salisb)," and we were told that "màrṇḍi" grass continues to be the totem of the sub-clan, Nij Màrṇḍi, and if any of them chances to uproot one such grass, he will make a profound "johar" (*salutation*) and replant it.

The following sub-clans of the Màrṇḍis were noticed at Mayurbhanj:—

(i) Nij Màrṇḍi—with taboo of "Màrṇḍi" grass.

(ii) Miru baha Màrṇḍi :—The flower of a wild plant which yields a good fibre (*Abutilon Indicum*, Don) is the totem of this sub-clan, and they do not even touch these.

(iii) Bhaduli Màrṇḍi:—An interesting story was narrated to us by Sunaram Sòrèn, a Santal college student of Bamanghati, Mayurbhanj, to explain the genesis of this sub-clan, who, he assures us, traditionally belonged at first to the foregoing "Miru baha" sub-group. He said, "Once a *Miru baha*

St Mukherjee O. Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1932
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

Different Grades of Witches[1]

754
554 Whatever the traditions behind Witch-craft may be, the present-day Santal in Mayurbhanj believes that there are mainly two classes of witches, viz. *Ḍàn* and *Nañjòm*. The *Nañjòm* are the higher class amongst *Ḍàns*. When a *Nañjòm* becomes very expert and has all the *Ḍàn Boṅgas* under her control, she is then called a *Nañjòm*. She then walks with her hands, and her legs are stretched upwards. Her witchery is said to be very powerful and it is said, no ordinary *Ojha* (witch-doctor) can overcome her. The *Ḍáns* generally come out at night and take with them tigers which they call dogs (*Bhàtu*). Along with the so-called dogs, they roam about in troops in a naked condition. They worship their witch-gods and practise *mantras* (charms) learnt from their *gurus* (teachers). By exercising the charm of these *mantras*, secretly and repeatedly amongst human beings and domestic animals, they cause illness and sometimes bring death to them.

[756]

754 ### *Is Witch-Craft Inborn?*

The Santals say that the power of Witch-craft is not inborn but always acquired by training. The

---

[115] 1 The materials of this and the following sub-section were supplied by Messrs. Ananta Mañjhi and Samra Ch. Mañjhi of Rairangpur, Mayurbhanj.

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

584 and about twenty percent result from love or capture.

593 The average Santal remains madly in love with his wife for about two years after the marriage, thereafter, his ardour cools. With children, the world of reality makes its existence felt.

584 [607] [603] Lead in courtship is also taken by the woman. In such cases she requisitions the services of her obliging sister-in-law or grandmother, who conveys the message of love. The woman does not send presents to win over the man of her choice. Further 833 enquiry regarding the point if lead in coitus is taken by women, revealed that sometimes it happens like that. But should such news leak out, it becomes [558] a subject for jokes and the husband is thought as a worthless fellow, but nothing particular is thought 554 about the girl. The girl who forces her company 192 on men or belongs to many husbands is called a "dàri" by the Santals. The boy who likes the company of women rather too much is termed "Hiròm," and a flirt is called "Khildu". The licentious fellow, who cohabits with many women is censured as a "Candal."

152 We enquired to find out if the Santals are 834 jealous by nature or not. It transpired that ordinarily the Santals do not suspect anything wrong if their women-folk talk or mix with other men on business or in course of social rounds. But human nature

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

DRESS

291

The little apron or "lengta" which is worn by all Santal men, is made of white cloth, about four feet long and ten inches wide. In putting it they tie one thick-string round the waist and one end of this apron is tied with that string at the back and the portion left hanging is pulled through the legs from the back and up through the string in front, the rest sometimes hangs or is pulled through the legs from the front and tied with the string on the waist. The regular dress of the adult Santals consists of a loin cloth which hangs from the waist to the knee joint. The Santals generally use no head-dress. During marriage or other similar occasions they wear a turban, which is a long narrow white cloth, soaked in turmeric. Now-a-days young men, when they come to attend Hindu festivals like Durga, or Kali puja adorn their head with a yellow coloured turban. At present dhotis and saries are worn by the well-to-do Santals men and women respectively like the Bengalis. Boys till they are five or six years old wear nothing. The Santal adults do not always wear a body cloth, using it in the cold season and very rarely in summer. When they come to the market they wear it over their 'lengta'. They have no warm clothing for the winter, and children of two or three years remain undressed.

[178]

[554]
[178]

The Santal women use two separate clothes.[1] One they wear and with the other they cover their breasts. The piece which they wear is three feet long and two and a half feet in width. The piece which they use to cover the breasts is three feet long and two feet wide. The Santals when wearing new cloth colour the four

1 [Erratum: this should read "cloths." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

man, together with that of all the other officials, was renewed annually, but there is little reality in it at the present day and the post is held for life. He is the spokesman of the villagers in all matters affecting their temporal welfare. In the original settlements it was usual for two or three brothers to start the new village together. The eldest brother assumed the leading position, and all the lands cleared or claimed for the future were in his gift. The cultivable land was divided equally after some portions had been reserved for the officials in recognition of the services they would be called on to perform for the benefit of the community, and the headman received the biggest share of the reserved land. As the village grew, others came to settle. Some became the tenants of the headman, fleeing from the oppression of landlords elsewhere. Others came into the village by marrying daughters of the first settlers. So it comes about that the family of the headman is the most substantial in the village. During the course of years, however, even the headman has in the majority of cases lost his original rights to a non-Santal landlord and has himself become an under-tenant, in spite of which his family has maintained its favourable position in relation to the rest of the villagers. In some cases he has also been able to acquire the rights of other tenants who have defaulted for one reason or another in paying rent. In addition to land, the headman receives other payments which he can use for his own benefit. Thus, when an offender against tribal custom is fined the headman receives a fourth of the total amount. During the spring hunts he receives a part of the flesh of every animal slain by a man from his own village. During the marriage ceremonies he occupies an important position throughout, and when a new bride is coming to his village her father has to pay a rupee to him before the party sets out from her home. At all times he is treated with great respect, especially by the younger members of the community. A marriage party always pays its respects first at his house, and at festivals, when the young men go dancing through the village-street, they start outside the headman's house.

In all matters involving the members of more than one village he is the acknowledged representative of his own people, whether it be the making of arrangements for a marriage or the fixing of dates for festivals and for hunts. In the settling of disputes he acquires considerable experience, being the chairman of the council in his own village and meeting with the headmen of other villages when the hunt council sits. Enjoying a position

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

of great prestige, it is true of nearly all the village headmen that their whole bearing reveals a sense of dignity, and the exercise of their responsibilities has developed a practical wisdom in dealing with men and affairs that is not to be despised. It is unfortunate that the trend of policy under the British Government (except in the Santal Parganas district) has done much to undermine the authority of the headman, firstly through the development of a highly organized and centralized system of justice. When the aggrieved party in a dispute between Santals is able to seek redress in the distant district courts he is under a strong temptation to ignore the findings of the informal village and tribal councils. The temptation is all the stronger when the Hindu law administered by the court differs from Santal customary law, as it does in some important particulars. Secondly, the organs of local self-government which have been fostered in Bengal take no account of the Santal village system. It is true that some effort is made to secure representation of Santal interests by a system of nomination, but local influence has passed largely into the hands of the landlords. The government is aware of some of the disabilities under which Santals live, and since the passing of the Government of India Act, 1935, "Special Officers" have been appointed in several districts. It is their duty to watch over the interests of the Santals, but the success of their work depends largely on their own initiative, a factor which varies from one individual to another. In a few cases where Santal headmen have maintained their position in relation to dealings with non-Santals and with government, it is because they have secured some education and have been able to compete on more equal terms with their neighbours.

None of the other village officials compare with the headman for prestige. There is often a deputy headman, the *paranik*, who works as an adviser, but his main reason for existence is to function for the headman when the latter may be ill or away on family affairs, and he does not occupy a prominent place at other times. Many villages at the present day omit to appoint one. Next in importance comes the *jogmāñjhi*, who is still found in every village. It is difficult to define his functions in a phrase; he is a kind of "censor of morals". As such he is the guardian of the morals of the young men in the village, and his wife exercises oversight of the morals of the young women. Unlike many of the tribes to whom they are closely related, the Santals have no dormitory system for the young people of the village. They have no memory of ever having possessed

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42
[The Santal Christian Community]

794 87 191 179 178

from their aptitude at school in mastering the subject matter of their Bengali education and they are all too conscious of the early handicaps arising from bilingualism. They entertain a very natural ambition to give their children a better chance than they themselves have enjoyed, and so a number of them have banished the use of Santali from their homes. This is done not only to give their children a start in school, but also because they feel that if their children learn Santali first they will speak Bengali with a Santal, and therefore an uncultured, accent, on account of which they themselves have experienced the shafts of derision. In any case it is probable that owing to their education they find the Bengali language more adequate for the expression of many of their own needs. They are therefore predisposed to turn their backs on Santal culture and adopt modes of behaviour that are alien to the Santal village. The moral standards of individualism and those of a society where the individual counts for little have clashed in their lives and have not yet resulted in an equilibrium.

794 781 • 554

Nevertheless, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the Christian Church is making some contributions of real significance to the whole community through the new educated leadership which is also responsible for elements of real value in the life of the Christian Church itself. Among the leaders, as also among the rank and file, there is much genuine religious experience and sincere piety that issue in unselfish service to the village as a whole and to the Christian Church in particular. Chuneram Hembrom, a pensioner of the mission, wrote: "Now because of my age they have pensioned me on seven rupees a month. However, God and Jesus the Saviour of men have not deserted me. The spirit of my mind is cool (i.e., it is at peace). I believe that if we unite body and mind in prayer and ask anything in the name of Jesus it will be granted to us. All of us pray to Jesus Christ. Although my wife can neither read nor write, she prays with knowledge every evening and we are content. By our deeds and by our words we bring pain to God, but through Jesus we ask for forgiveness."[1] Many members of the second generation of Christians are active in a hundred local situations, serving their fellows. Some are revered by many generations of school children and are themselves proud of those whom they have helped to go farther on the road of learning than they themselves have travelled. In time of famine and sickness they spend themselves on behalf of their fellows and are trusted by all.

794

Corporate life in the Christian community finds expression in

[1] From a manuscript in my possession.